



Review of Jamin Andreas Hübner's *Religion and Cooperative Economics: Justice in an Age of Capital and Catastrophe*, Palgrave Macmillan 2025, xxvii + 377 pp.

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Jamin Andreas Hübner's work, *Religion and Cooperative Economics: Justice in an Age of Capital and Catastrophe*, fleshes out the relationship between religion and cooperative economics, particularly towards addressing economic justice. Hübner raises and responds to two main concerns regarding our contemporary economy: first, he counters "contemporary Christianity's strange (and unconscionable) marriage to neoliberal capitalism" (p. viii). Second, he counters the cynicism regarding our current economy, given the political, social, and environmental upheavals that are taking place in the world.

In response to these two troubling trends, Hübner argues that religion and cooperative economics can speak to society, offering an alternative. In the first chapter, the author offers the following thesis as a guide to this work: "economic justice is a central religious concern that is effectively fulfilled through cooperative economics" (p. 1). Hübner defines economic justice as the presence of certain characteristics, such as "(1) honest business practice... (2) cooperation over intentional competition and coercion; (3) solidarity with the working class, poor, and oppressed; (4) an orientation and ethos that seeks basic human freedom/self-determination (and with it, formal democratization and decentralization of power, or some degree of "horizontalism") against concentrated power and oppression; (5) redistribution of wealth and resources that ensures the essential needs of all are met... (6) sustainability and ecological justice, which includes long-term planning instead of merely short-term goals, and policies that ensure that the vulnerable do not bear the brunt of ecological destruction caused by economic pursuits" (p. 2). Cooperative economics, on the other hand, is understood as the "theory and practice of economic activity that exhibits democratic co-management and member co-ownership that ultimately does good for its members" (p. 4).

Hübner elaborates on his thesis by first discussing economic justice in different world religions, showing how most of them would advocate for some form of economic justice, and would thus disagree with the current extremely neoliberal capitalist model discussed in Chapter 2. In Chapters 3 and 4 Hübner spends more time on Christianity specifically—not because it is superior, but because of its significant relationship and connection in building

and spreading the current economic systems that society has. Hübner explains and critiques how Christian pro-capitalism opposes the kind of economic justice imagined not only in Christianity but also in other major world religions; he then also shows how cooperative economics is a better alternative in moving towards economic justice. The final chapter, Chapter 7, offers some concrete strategies that can help move economic systems away from the neoliberal capitalist mindset to one that is more like the cooperative economics system envisioned and elaborated on in the book.

The work done in the book is clearly relevant for our current context, where most will acknowledge that something is wrong with our current systems, and that they are broken or in crisis. The book helps us understand how religion can be insightful for economics and the kinds of social systems we inhabit and create, moving towards an alternative system that might be more aligned towards economic justice. The arguments in the book are made in a clear, organized, and structured manner; clear definitions elucidate how the author is using certain concepts and how they fit together to scaffold his argument, given that it is bridging the gap between different disciplines. The final chapter outlines the way forward in actualizing the shift towards cooperative economics—and this initial direction might still be further developed in another manuscript, especially in terms of how such strategies may differ given different contexts, such as between the global north and the global south.

While this book cannot be considered as a beginner's textbook (it assumes a certain level of knowledge in economics and religion), it may nevertheless be a helpful text for those studying theology, economics, and political science—as well as those who already have some idea of these fields and our current context. The book, for example, could be used in a graduate level class or upper class undergraduate course on the subject matter, in courses dealing with such topics as political economy, ethics, and globalization.

Overall, the book helps us develop our understanding of how economic systems and religions interact with each other, of the parts they play in contributing to the current socio-economic systems the world faces, and of how communities might imagine and create an alternative through cooperative economics.